



**Response to the Care Inspectorate Consultation:
Improving Services for Children, Young People and Families
January 2013**

General Comments

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation. CELCIS is the Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children in Scotland based at the University of Strathclyde. The role of the Care Inspectorate is pivotal in improving services for children and young people. We welcome the recognition of improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people in society and providing a framework connecting internal and external evaluation. The specific attention on looked after children and care leavers demonstrated through illustrations is valuable given the vital role of Community Planning Partnerships in coordinating quality services for this group. We highlight the strength of Quality Indicators in assessing strategic commissioning, staff development and meaningful participation of children, young people and families.

The Christie *Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services* (2011) clearly states the imperative for public services to work together to improve outcomes. The development of a set of Quality Indicators are viewed as an excellent opportunity to further embed *Getting it Right for Every Child* on a national basis. A key challenge is the meaningful implementation of the Quality Indicators amid a period of significant legislative change with direct implications for Community Planning Partnerships. Our principle concern is that other policy drivers placed on Community Planning Partnerships will overshadow their ability to fully implement this evaluation tool to maximise the positive impact for children and young people.

1. Cognisance with other legislative developments

The publication of the new Quality Indicators is timely; however, CELCIS would like to draw attention to forthcoming legislation that may impact on community planning structures and the reporting of outcomes. Under Section 16 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, there is a duty for local authorities, health boards, police, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority to participate in Community Planning processes. The proposed Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill

states an intention to place a duty on public bodies to work together to focus on improving children's wellbeing; furthermore, there is a discussion about extending the public bodies the duty applies to.

The Adult Health and Social Care (Scotland) Bill proposes that existing Community Health Partnerships are replaced with Health and Social Care Partnerships with joint responsibility of NHS boards and local authorities, working with third and independent sectors. This will involve integrated budgets for joint commissioning and delivery of services to meet nationally agreed outcomes. Local partners have the discretion to include services for children in these plans (already planned by some local authorities and health boards). It remains unclear what the relationship between Health and Social Care Partnerships and Community Planning Partnerships will be but it will have implications for reporting against the proposed indicators.

There are also other legislative developments that will have an impact on planning structures as well as the landscape of children's services: the Community Empowerment & Renewal Bill, Social Care (Self –Directed Support) (Scotland) Bill, Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill as well as the Budget (Scotland) Bill and UK-wide welfare reform.

In light of legislative developments and the impact on children's services, we would suggest that the Care Inspectorate should consider the feasibility of the Quality Indicators across the various strategic partnerships that have responsibility for planning, delivering and evaluating services under a range of legal duties.

2. Effectiveness of Community Planning Partnerships

There has been limited evaluation of the effectiveness of Community Planning Partnerships in improving outcomes for children. In a review of the role of Community Planning Partnerships in economic development, Audit Scotland (2011) highlighted the challenges facing Community Planning Partnerships in delivering on national outcomes; use of data and consistency of indicators for Single Outcome Agreements; managing performance across partnership contexts and resolving tensions between national and local priorities.¹ The Christie Commission (2011) highlighted the following barriers in public services working together to improve outcomes:

- Different accountability frameworks (statutory duties, audit and inspection) often pull organisations in different directions;
- Performance management processes are generally expressed in terms of inputs and outputs (activities and service standards) rather than outcomes;
- Different arrangements for funding, budgeting and accounting for the use of resources act as a constraint to joint activity;

¹ Audit Scotland (2011) [The Role of Community Planning Partnerships in Economic Development](#), Edinburgh: Audit Scotland.

- Established ways of working often do not make the most positive impact on outcomes;
- Services may not know enough about the outcomes most valued by people and communities; and
- A narrow or short-term focus on the objectives of particular organisations acts against the adoption of preventative initiatives.

These barriers need to be overcome as 'a key objective of public services reform is to ensure public services are enabled and incentivised to work together effectively to achieve outcomes' (2011:42). The barriers identified by the Christie Commission will need to be addressed collectively for Community Planning Partnerships to improve services for children.

The self-evaluation framework presupposes Community Planning Partnerships can collectively deliver improved outcomes. We need to be mindful of the variation across Partnerships and meet support needs to ensure they maximise the value of this tool.

3. Priorities for Community Planning Partnerships

The new Scottish Government and COSLA's *Single Outcome Agreements: Guidance to Community Planning Partnerships* (December 2012) specifies five priority areas: Economic recovery and growth; Employment; Early years; Safer and stronger communities, and reducing offending; Health inequalities and physical activity; and Outcomes for older people. Community Planning Partnerships can use a 'Menu of local outcome indicators' which cover these priority areas and wider.

The new Quality Indicators need to correlate with the work of Community Planning Partnerships to ensure the necessary cohesion in approach.

The Scottish Government consultation on the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill proposed a duty for public bodies to design, plan and deliver services together to improve children's wellbeing. Furthermore, the consultation proposed a duty for public bodies to report on children's rights. The *Getting it Right for Every Child* programme clearly articulates the important role of a myriad of public bodies, as well as third sector organisations, who are involved in children and young people's lives. Thus, there is a question raised about the status of Community Planning Partnerships and a potential duty to report on children's rights.

The Care Inspectorate should consider this development and the accountability of Community Planning Partnerships on children's rights reporting.

Questions

1. The main purpose of the guide is to assist Community Planning Partnerships to establish a shared understanding of well-being and set challenging targets for improving outcomes for children and young people. How useful is the framework towards achieving this?

The Framework partially achieves this aim; however the scale of this task should not be underestimated. Membership of Community Planning Partnerships can involve a diverse group of stakeholders who will have a range of perspectives on well-being. For example, as set out in *These are our Bairns: A guide for Community Planning Partnerships being a good corporate parent* (Scottish Government, 2008) many public bodies have an important role, as specifically outlined for elected members, social work, education, housing, police, corporate services, leisure and cultural services, independent sector, Children's Hearings and Scottish Courts. Legal services are often omitted from Partnerships but can play a pivotal, timely role for children at risk of harm or in need. Significantly, the third sector and private sector are key providers of services for children, young people and their families and should be central to the development of services; yet their involvement in Community Planning Partnerships can be limited. Children, young people, families and the communities in which they live should also play a pivotal role in defining wellbeing. As the Christie Commission highlights:

We recommend that, in developing new patterns of service provision, public service organisations should increasingly develop and adopt positive approaches which build services around people and communities, their needs, aspirations, capacities and skills, and work to build up their autonomy and resilience (2011:27).

Using an asset-based approach, services are developed *with* people, rather than *for* people. Therefore, it is essential that shared understandings of well-being are not simply professionals' views but actively involve local communities.

The shared vision of wellbeing as developed must be reflected in the new Single Outcome Agreement to ensure sufficient focus on wellbeing is collectively achieved.

2. The framework is designed to be relevant to a wide range of organisations in the public, independent and third sector providing services for children, young people and families. How useful is the framework in supporting self-evaluation across the range of organisations working with children, young people and families in your area?

The Framework should be useful in supporting self-evaluation across organisations. Clearly, many different models of self-evaluation will have been developed across independent and third sector services. It is anticipated that the Framework will be a valuable addition to current in-house frameworks or an opportunity for the adoption of the Framework for some organisations. As the framework is underpinned by *Getting it Right for Every Child* and the child wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI), this will be well-received. It should be noted that in the new Single Outcome Guidance (2012), use of the Edinburgh-Warwick Child Wellbeing Scale is used as a data source and there is currently no centrally held data that corresponds

to each of the SHANARRI indicators. Also, in response to the Children and Young People Bill, a number of organisations raised the oversight of spirituality in the well-being indicators.

The tone of the document is accessible. In supporting organisations, the Care Inspectorate should consider the development of resources that explain the Framework to aid the engagement of children, young people and families.

3. The quality indicators provide a toolkit to help with evaluating and improving the quality of services for children, young people and families. The 22 quality indicators aim to cover the key aspects of the work of Community Planning Partnerships in the delivery of services. How comprehensive do you think these are and is there anything else you would like to see covered?

We consider the Quality Indicators to be broadly comprehensive. Given the importance of working together, we queried the absence of this in the ‘high-level questions’ although accept this is maybe implicit in the management and leadership areas. The illustrations were valuable. We questioned whether some of these could be expanded as they lacked detail and could be too simplistic as ‘very good’ or ‘weak’; one idea proposed was to give some case studies with the wider spectrum shown. Our greater reflection was on the translation of these indicators for young people and young adults (as care leavers), rather than children. It would be valuable to ensure that examples are provided for this group.

Our reflections on specific indicators are:

- **Impact on children** – Responding to each of the wellbeing indicators is positive given some indicators are given greater importance than others;
- **Impact on staff** – We felt very positively about the value based approach shared;
- **Delivery of services** – We felt some concern that ‘early stages’ may be interpreted as early years rather than all ages of children and young people; furthermore, we need to ensure young people are supported at crisis points as well;
- **Planning for individual children and young people** – We would like an additional statement to be added for stable environments for looked after young people *into adulthood* as we remain concerned that these transitions could be overlooked;
- **Involving children, young people and families** – We welcome the detail provided in these indicators and the specific recognition of the value of independent advocacy;
- **Policies, procedures and legal measures** – The recognition of legal measures is key in safeguarding and supporting all children and young people; this should be recognised through representation on Community Planning Partnerships;
- **Participation of children, young people, families and stakeholders** - We value the inclusion of participation in policy, planning and service development; we would ask for a further statement on the provision of timely feedback and action resulting from participation;

- **Management of resources** – Strategic commissioning should be based on assessed need of the population and be informed by an evidence base;
- **Leadership** – We queried whose leadership was being evaluated given the membership across the Partnership; we were concerned that ‘leaders’ are evaluating their own leadership and considered the use of staff surveys, 360 degree assessments or peer partnership approaches to develop this indicator.

4. The framework aims to support successful implementation of 'Getting it right for every child' and integrated approaches to improving the lives of the most vulnerable children and young people. How useful is the framework in evaluating what difference these approaches are making to the lives of children, young people and families?

We welcome this approach and the commitment to vulnerable children. We believe the Framework will be very useful in principle when considering the needs of the most vulnerable children. We do have two specific concerns:

1. The Framework will not be given the importance needed in the current Community Planning Partnerships amidst other competing outcomes. The key policy areas may be drivers for action which may not include the most vulnerable groups. For example, a policy driver of early years may be to the detriment of young people.
2. Data for answering this question is not available. There are considerable challenges in the collation, analysis and dissemination of robust data that can inform Community Planning Partnerships. The partnerships may be limited in vision by the data that is currently available under the Menu of Local Indicators (for example, Child poverty rates). This will be very useful to target geographical local areas but may overlook specific groups (for example, care leavers).

5. Is there a role for the Care Inspectorate and other scrutiny bodies in building capacity for joint self-evaluation across Community Planning Partnerships, and how do you think this should be provided?

The Care Inspectorate and other scrutiny bodies can play a key leadership role in building capacity for joint self-evaluation across Community Planning Partnerships.

1. At a national level, the Care Inspectorate should ensure that this Framework of Quality Indicators is given an important status; this is especially relevant given the increasing demands being made of Community Planning Partnerships to deliver on a wide range of national outcomes. Links need to be made to the Early Years Collaborative, ensuring that the indicators are embedded from the start.

2. Self-evaluation should be about a *process* not simply a form-filling exercise. The Care Inspectorate should take a lead role in supporting people to achieve good practice as knowledge experts. They should also disseminate good practice examples of Community Planning Partnerships who are engaging effectively with local communities to improve services for children. Peer learning events where different Community Planning Partnerships are able to meet to exchange ideas, successes and challenges may be welcomed.
3. A simplified and accessible version of the Framework in a range of formats should be considered by the Care Inspectorate to encourage wider participation.
4. The Care Inspectorate should consider the role of 'Young Inspectors' as piloted within the Scottish Children's Reporters Association as a model to demonstrate their own commitment to engaging with children, young people and families.

6. How do you envisage on-going support for improvement by scrutiny/improvement bodies working best across your partnership?

We value the recognition that evaluation is a continuous dynamic process; however, the reporting demands on Community Planning Partnerships can easily translate into an overly bureaucratic body that frames evaluation by reporting mechanisms and timescales. It is difficult to envisage how continuous evaluation will be possible across so many diverse partners. There will clearly be evaluation of outcomes within the distinct partners (although perhaps diverse depending on the body); however, we feel this differs from the outcomes of the Community Planning Partnership itself. Therefore, we think on-going support in identifying, measuring, analysing and implementing action on outcomes will be a key part of the success of this initiative. As highlighted in our introductory comments, we are mindful to specifically address the barriers to achieving outcomes as outlined by the Christie Commission (2011).

Organisation Name:

Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children in Scotland (CELCIS), University of Strathclyde

Surname:

Hill

Forename:

Louise

Contact Information

Address:

CELCIS, University of Strathclyde, Level 3, Lord Hope Building
141 St James Road, Glasgow

Postcode:

G4 0LT

Phone:

0141 444 8533

Email:

Louise.Hill@strath.ac.uk

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of a group or organisation?

Organisation

Name of Group/Organisation

CELCIS

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